

# Major Themes

## **THEME #1: CHANGE AND GROWTH**

### **ANALYSIS & EXAMPLES:**

Before Samantha Kingston dies in a car accident while going to Kent Fuller's party, her life has been perfect. She is simple-minded and has a great desire to maintain her popularity. Samantha seems to only care about her small group of friends, but struggles with herself as she remembers past memories and continues to ignore her other classmates. "I know some of you are thinking maybe I deserved it. Maybe I shouldn't have sent that rose to Juliet or dumped my drink on her at the party. Maybe I shouldn't have copied off Lauren Lornet's quiz. Maybe I shouldn't have said those things to Kent.. So bad I deserved to die? So bad I deserved to die like that? Is what I did really so much worse than what anybody else does?" (Oliver, 80). After her death, she is confused about reliving the same day over and over again, but later understands that she has to change and fix her mistakes.

Samantha starts to become a different person and discovers that the reason for her reliving the same day is to set things right for the future. She regrets various choices she made during high school and feels bad about the many people she hurt. "As I head up from the gym it strikes me how strange people are. You can see them every day- you can think you know them- and then you find out you hardly know them at all. I feel exhilarated, kind of like I'm being spun around a whirlpool, circling closer and closer

around the same people and the same events but seeing things from different angles” (159). This shows the development in Samantha’s character because she tries to forget the past and move on. She also begins to treat herself and others with more respect. After the seven days, Samantha finds out so much more about herself and realizes that popularity is not the only important factor. She regrets that she did not pay attention to the smaller parts of her life, but succeeds in making things right and letting go.

## **THEME #2: CHANCES**

### **ANALYSIS & EXAMPLES:**

After Samantha Kingston dies, she receives numerous chances to relive her last day. At first, Samantha is confused when she wakes up to the same day and tries to escape death by changing certain actions or decisions. Although Samantha encounters different events or situations due to her new choices, she dies again and figures out that death is inevitable. "I cry until it seems amazing that one person could have so many tears. It seems like they must be coming from the very tips of my toes. Then I sleep without dreaming. I wake up thinking about a movie I once saw. The main character dies somehow- I forget how- but he's only half dead" (Oliver, 136). The quote reveals Samantha’s emotional changes and shows that Samantha wakes up to another (same) day. Sam wonders why she has to live the same day over and over again, but does not question anything that happens.

As the main character discovers more about herself by going through different situations with friends and family, she learns that these chances (to live the same day) were given to her so that she could fix past mistakes, discover more about her “true” self, build new memories, and set things right for the people close to her. “Now I get it. I’m starved for different light, a different sun, different sky. I’ve never really thought about it before, but it’s a miracle how many kinds of light there are in the world...I think about what I’ll do to survive all of the millions and millions of days that will be exactly like this one” (187). Samantha begins see her life from a new perspective and begins to accept the fact that she has to relive the same day in order to change her past actions. She also learns that unless she changes herself to be a better person, she would not be able to become free of the ongoing cycle. Thus, she uses her seven chances and seven days to change herself and the others around her, in order to set things right for the future.

## Symbols

### **SYMBOL #1: CUPID DAY**

### **ANALYSIS & EXAMPLES:**

Cupid Day most clearly represents Samantha’s change in personality and attitude. Before her death, she thinks of this day (at school) as a crucial event and worries about receiving enough roses to show her popularity. “It’s a big deal how many roses you get. You can tell who’s popular and who isn’t by the number of roses they’re

holding. It's bad if you get under ten and humiliating if you don't get more than five- it basically means that you're either ugly or unknown" (Oliver, 13). Samantha works hard to maintain her high position and enjoys the special privileges that come with popularity. At first she does not care about how she treats others, but later regrets her unkind actions.

While trying to fix her past mistakes and learning more about herself, Samantha learns that popularity is not everything and that there are more important aspects of life to care about. She also approaches Cupid Day in a new way after going through the same couple of days. "The whole point is to show other people how many friends you have. But everybody *knows* how many friends everybody else has. And it's not like you actually *get* more friends this way or, I don't know, get closer to the friends you do have" (272). Sam no longer cares about maintaining her status or popularity, but turns to focus on the more significant parts of her life.

## **SYMBOL #2: IZZY (SAMANTHA'S YOUNGER SISTER)**

### **ANALYSIS & EXAMPLES:**

Izzy is very different from most people Samantha decides to spend her time with. Although younger, Izzy can be seen as a symbol of hope and courage; as well as a role model and source of inspiration for Samantha. She eases tensions with her bright and positive attitudes and helps Samantha view life from a different perspective. Izzy does not care about what others think about her and enjoys life in her own way; which is quite the opposite of Samantha's personality. "Then again, I guess Izzy doesn't care.

That's another thing that strikes me as funny: that my eight-year-old sister is braver than I am. She's probably braver than most of the people at Thomas Jefferson. I wonder if that will ever change, if it will get beaten out of her" (Oliver, 274). Sam admires her younger sister for having this trait and thinks she is brave for wanting to stand out from the crowd.

When spending time with Izzy, Samantha is able to recall many different moments of her life and begins to regret her past actions. She contains a desire to change the past, but knows that since this is not possible, it is better to just move on. Thus, the main character makes a great effort to make amends and tries to impact the future in positive ways. "But this is my *voice*." She says it quietly but with insistence. "How would you be able to tell when I was talking?" This is such a weird Izzy-answer I can't think of a response to it, so I just reach forward and squeeze her. There are so many things I want to tell her, so many things she doesn't know" (282). Izzy's unique personality serves as a model for Samantha to follow in order to break free of the cycle, giving her newfound hope. Samantha acquires Izzy's unique, brave, confident personality traits, and eventually succeeds as a strong individual.

## Chapter Study Questions

### PROLOGUE

## questions:

1. Who was the last person Samantha thought about before she died?
2. Why do you think the books starts off with Samantha's death?
3. How is the prologue significant in understanding the rest of the novel?

## answers:

1.

The last person Samantha thought of before she died was Vicky Hamilton. They had been friends in elementary school, but were not that close. Vicky had also been called "fat" and teased by Lindsay during P.E class.

2.

The book starts off with Samantha's death so that the readers are not confused with the progression of the story. By having one of the major events lead to the smaller details, the audience is also able to know more about the main character and the various changes she goes through.

3.

The prologue is significant in understanding the novel because it sets the time frame and outline of events. The readers are also able to know more about the main character after reading the prologue.

## CHAPTER ONE

questions:

1. How does Samantha view popularity as a high school student?
2. In what ways do Samantha's own opinions (on popularity and friends) affect her?
3. Do Samantha's friends influence her in a good or bad way? Why?

answers:

1.

Samantha thinks that popularity is necessary to survive high school and have good time. She is proud of her position at school and enjoys being friends with three of the most popular girls at school.

2.

Samantha is affected by popularity in (mostly) negative ways. She acts unkind or ignores the people that she thinks aren't important. Samantha believes that she and her friends

have the most power over the school and can get away with anything because they are popular. Her desire to maintain her high position also becomes more apparent.

3.

Samantha's friends influence her in (mostly) bad ways. Although they are all best friends, they push her to do things she is not comfortable with and take advantage of Samantha's low self confidence.

## CHAPTER TWO

questions:

1. What does Samantha realize after she wakes up?
2. What day is it and how many roses did she receive?
3. Why does she try to change plans and do things differently?

answers:

1.

Samantha realizes that she has woken up to the same day she died. She is confused, but still decides to go along with everything.



2.

The day she died was Cupid Day at school. Samantha wakes up to the same day and remembers receiving four roses.

3.

Sam changes plans so that she can avoid death. She makes different choices and tries not to go to the party, but is unsuccessful.

## CHAPTER THREE

questions:

1. Why does Samantha pretend to be sick?
2. In what place does Samantha stay for a long time and who does she see?
3. What causes Samantha's bad mood at the end of the day?

answers:

1.

Samantha pretends to be sick because she does not want to go to school and relive the same day. She becomes worried about dying again and is unsure of what to do.

2.

Samantha stays in the locker room and sees a girl crying. The girl goes up to her and mentions that she does not want to get caught for cheating.

3.

Samantha and her friends hear about Juliet Syke's suicide. They feel bad about their unkindness towards her, but quickly let it go. When Samantha tries talking to Lindsay, she only mentions that it was "right for Julia to die".

## CHAPTER FOUR

### questions:

1. Why does Samantha fight with Lindsay in the car?

2. Why does Samantha try to kiss her math teacher?

3. What does Samantha realize about Anna?

### answers:

1.

Samantha fights with Lindsay in the car because Lindsay does not open up about her past. Lindsay kicks Samantha out of the car, and drives away. However, Samantha does not care nor get mad because she knows everything will be gone the next day.

2.

Samantha hopes that by taking different actions she would be able to avoid death. She also knows that it is okay for her to try or do anything, because by the next day, nothing will matter.

3.

After Samantha gets ignored at the lunch table, she goes to the bathroom and sees Anna. They talk for quite a while, and Samantha finds out that Anna is nice and fun to be around.

## CHAPTER FIVE

questions:

1. What does Samantha tell her mom in the morning?

2. Why does Samantha agree to babysit Izzy?

3. Where do Samantha and Izzy go?

answers:

1.

Samantha tells her mom that she does not feel like going to school. When she continues to show concern by asking various questions, Samantha gets annoyed and just tells her mom that she and Rob broke up.

2.

Samantha agrees to babysit Izzy because she regrets not spending enough time with the family. She also admires Izzy's unique personality and hopes to get to know her better.

3.

They go to Goosepoint Park and have fun talking while looking at the sky change colors. Samantha feels sad that she cannot spend more time with Izzy, and thinks about how she will make things better for her friends and family.

## CHAPTER SIX

questions:

1.

What change can be seen in Samantha?

2. Why did Rob get angry at her and what was her reaction?

3. What does Juliet reveal to Samantha about Lindsay?

answers:

1.

Samantha acts friendly to everyone (including the “uncool” kids) and does not seem to care about what others think about her. She no longer has a strong desire to maintain her popularity and discovers that her relationships with friends are more important. Samantha also mentions that she feels free, happy, and at ease.

2.

Samantha finally realizes that Rob did not truly like her and begins to ignore him. However, Rob cannot figure out the problem and gets mad at Samantha for not caring about him. Samantha is disappointed at his reaction and just walks away. She later meets Kent and kisses him.

3.

Juliet reveals a big secret to Samantha when she asks about Lindsay’s past. Juliet mentions that she and Lindsay were best friends until fifth grade, and that it had been Lindsay who wet herself at night during the Girl Scout camping trip.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## questions:

1. Why does Samantha say goodbye to everyone in the morning?
2. What does Samantha do for Kent?
3. What does she do right before she leaves for the party?

## answers:

1.

Samantha wakes up with a feeling that it would be her last day. She looks at her sister and parents for a very long time before she leaves for school. It is also the last time they will all be together. At the door, Samantha says her final goodbye and walks away from her family.

2.

Samantha breaks up with Rob and sends a rose to Kent. She regrets acting unkind to him in the past, but is happy that she has made things better between them.

3.

Since Samantha thinks it is her last day, she leaves a note to all her friends. She writes down their unique traits, says thank you, and goodbye.

## EPILOGUE

questions:

1. What point does Samantha try to emphasize?
2. What is the most important part of her life now?
3. How does she feel about her death and finally crossing over?

answers:

1.

Samantha emphasizes the point that she has changed and that she no longer thinks that popularity is that important.

2.

Samantha breaks up with Rob and sends a rose to Kent. She regrets acting unkind to him in the past, but is happy that she has made things better between them.

3.

Since Samantha thinks it is her last day, she leaves a note to all her friends. She writes down their unique traits, says thank you, and goodbye.